



# *Temecula*

Old Town

Poised for  
Revitalization

Livable  
Places  
Profile

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Mobile Source  
Air Pollution Reduction  
Review Committee



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

# *About the Profile*

This profile is sponsored by the Land Use Education Program of the Mobile Source Air Reduction Review Committee. The goal of this program is to show how cities and their regions can undertake an integrated planning process to implement transportation, air quality and land use development initiatives leading to quality of life and environmental benefits. The Southern California Association of Governments in partnership with the Local Government Commission prepared this profile for the Mobile Source Air Reduction Review Committee with funds authorized under AB 2766.

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Old Town has something for everybody.



Farmers Market

# *Poised for Revitalization*

Situated on the Interstate 15 corridor in western Riverside County between Corona and Escondido, the City of Temecula stands distinguished from its adjacent historical rural and bedroom communities by its strong industrial and commercial economic base. A city that only recently incorporated in 1989, its history dates back to the early 1800's with the arrival of missionaries from Mission San Luis Rey. In 1880, Temecula's historic downtown, now known as "Old Town", came into being with the coming of the railroad and the town post office.

Today, Old Town's main street, Front Street, resembles an authentic early-California, western-motif downtown with a mix of turn-of-the-century

structures. Newer commercial developments are architecturally mastered and designed to be consistent with their historic counterparts.

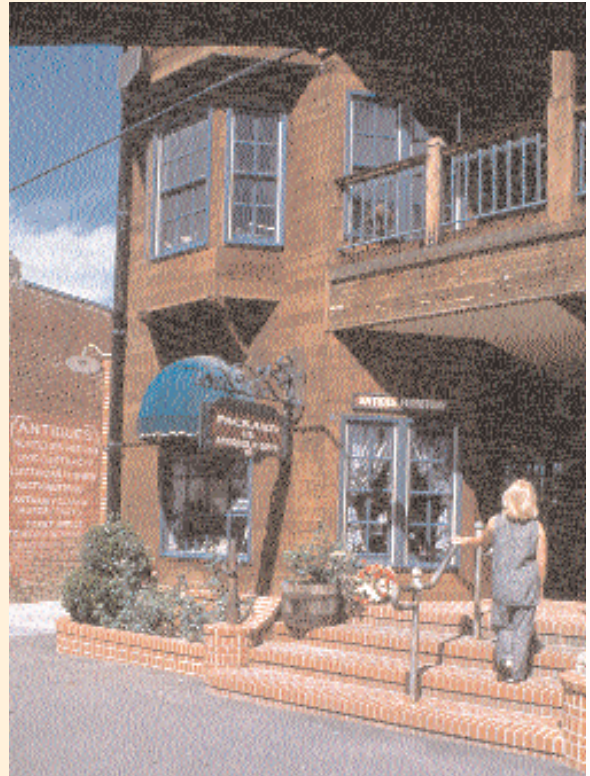
As a result of the conscientious efforts of the private and public sectors to maintain an historical western experience in Old Town, the downtown is poised to experience an economic revitalization that can support abundant specialty retail, commercial and recreational activity typical of a full-fledged redeveloped "main street". Specialty retail shop owners are optimistic regarding Old Town's fledgling revitalization, and are experiencing growth by serving tourists, out-of-state shoppers, and local residents alike.



# *City plans Preserve History...*

The City of Temecula's Community Development Director, Gary Thornhill, is an advocate of incorporating livable community concepts into Temecula's development plans and codes. One of the City's forefront actions was to create the Village Center Overlay within their General Plan, which resulted in an Ahwanhee Community Design award from the Local Government Commission in 1994. The Village Center Overlay promotes the development of a concentrated mix of human activity in the form of residential, retail, office, public facilities and recreational land uses within walking distance of one another. The accent, of course, is on pedestrian, bicycle and transit forms of transportation. Old Town Temecula is one of those areas of the City designated for Village Center development patterns.

Long-range planning principles sometimes fall short in their "real world" application because there is a lack of supporting implementation tools. In the case of Old Town, however, Temecula has additional implementation tools which include the Citywide Design Guidelines and the Old Town Temecula Specific Plan. Both plans support enhanced livability through development and design criteria. For example, the Village Center Overlay district uses performance standards in lieu of traditional development minimums and maximums. Land use intensity is encouraged, providing a mix of land uses, amenities, and architectural compatibility is achieved. The Village Center also provides design guidance with respect to building scale and design, parking, circulation, and transit, all with an eye toward pedestrian activity and comfort.



**Clocktower Building**

As a second cornerstone of development, the City-Wide Design Guidelines reinforce the development of "village center" characteristics by defining those aspects of design that will be common to all Village Centers throughout the community. An example of this is the de-emphasis on auto use by reducing the number of required parking spaces, siting off-street parking at the rear of structures, and encouraging shared and subterranean parking. Streets are to be designed with the pedestrian and bicyclist in mind, in addition to the automobile; for instance, traffic calming devices are recommended, such as reducing the walking distance for pedestrians at intersections.

# Temecula Specific Plan

The Old Town Temecula Specific Plan is the final cornerstone to establish Old Town Temecula as a vital core of "Village Center" living. The Specific Plan, developed with extensive citizen participation and adopted by the City in February 1994, has received four awards to date including the 1993 Inland Empire Design Institute Award, the 1995 Inland Empire Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) award for Public Involvement - Outstanding Public Educational Document, the 1995 Inland Empire American Planning Association (APA) Comprehensive Planning Award, and the 1995 AEP Outstanding Environmental Resource Document for the Old Town Specific Plan/EIR Mitigation Monitoring Program.

A "floating zone", called "The Shootout Zone", can be used anywhere within the Tourist Retail Core District where a turn-of-the-century shopping experience is desired. The "Shootout Zone" contains development and design guidelines governing store appearance and streetscape design to re-create an 1890's "main street" shopping atmosphere. The streetscape guidelines call for dirt streets, hitching posts, watering troughs, raised board sidewalks, and area 'nodes' for special events.



Chaparral Antique Mall

*The Specific Plan established ten Land Use Districts with associated design and development criteria that ensures the preservation of Old Town's historical character while promoting its development for tourism and community activity. The Land Use Districts include allowances for a mix of retail commercial uses along with provisions for residential uses.*

Old Town Specific Plan also recommends multi-year promotional and marketing strategies. For example, the Specific Plan suggests the formation of a Main Street organization and the hiring of a main street coordinator to act as a liaison between the organization and the City. Other implementation strategies include obtaining recognition through the California Main Street program, establishing a business improvement district, ongoing special event coordination, the production of marketing materials, cooperative business advertising and a business recruitment assistance program.



# PUBLIC & *Investment*



**Rancho West Apartments**

Recently, the City has become more aggressive in its public investments to revitalize oldtown Temecula. The City is about to embark on a \$4,000,000 streetscape project along Front Street that will feature a wooden boardwalk interspersed with a concrete sidewalk, rolled curbs, landscaping, benches, and lantern-style light standards incorporating a speaker system.

The City has also stepped up its incentive programs for private businesses. Previously, the City had offered a low interest loan of \$5,000 for facade improvements. For a three-year period, there were no participants. The City recently amended the program to include a \$5,000 grant in addition to the loan, and allowed the loan to be forgiven if the property was not sold within five years of loan approval. Soon after, the city had its first participant, and within three months, five additional applications were filed to participate in the program. Participants in the program place a sign on their property identifying the redevelopment program.

Redevelopment programs addressing main street revitalization often give a back seat to addressing the economic and social health of surrounding residential

# PRIVATE



**Tot lot and new landscaping for Rancho West Apartments**

neighborhoods in relation to the commercial core. Temecula has invested in Old Town's adjacent residential neighborhoods, particularly an established Hispanic community along Pujol Street. Within this residential community, there are many multi-family housing projects. The City has used redevelopment set-aside funds to repaint, re-landscape and construct a child's play area for an existing multi-family residential project. The City also operates a community center on Pujol Street. Not far from the center on Pujol Street, there is a community policing field office operating out of an antique railroad car caboose.

*These are only a few of the many successful examples of public/private partnerships and investments which are pioneering the revitalization of Old Town Temecula. They also reflect the “vision-in-practice” established by the City’s planning and redevelopment efforts to build a solid foundation for Old Town by incorporating livable community concepts into Temecula’s development plans and codes.*



# *Transportation and Access*

Old Town is accessed from Interstate 15 via Rancho California Road on the north and Highway 79 on the south, traveling west to Front Street.

Both freeway exits are intended to be upgraded with additional westbound travel lanes to increase access, in part, to the Old Town planning area. A park-n-ride is proposed south of Rancho California Road and west of Interstate 15. Class II and III bicycle routes are planned to serve the Old Town Area, and a bridge is proposed on Main Street to serve pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Transit runs directly on Front Street, and bus turnouts are proposed at the intersections of Rancho California Road and 6th Street. A bus stop is also proposed at the intersection of Front and Main Streets in the downtown core.

The Old Town Specific Plan indicates that upon build out of the Tourist Retail Core District, there will be a parking shortfall. The Specific Plan discusses various financing options to provide for the additional parking and identifies a Village Square Parking Assessment District as the preferred option.



**Old Town's new Transportation Center.**

The City intends to take the lead in acquiring property and constructing downtown parking. Constructed with a public/private cooperative effort the City has already has one parking lot providing 78 parking spaces, which also serves as a Greyhound and Tour Bus Station. The Old Town Transportation Center will enhance regional transit, access and tourism in the vicinity of Old Town Temecula.





# *Activities and Events*



Old Town offers opportunity for fine restaurants and outdoor dining, small concerts, art galleries, specialty retail and curio shops. Any weekend night you'll hear live music, most often Country, as you stroll along Front Street.

The Redevelopment Agency also promotes Old Town regularly through annual and seasonal events. During the Christmas holidays, the Redevelopment Agency is promoting A Dickens

Christmas that includes children's theater performances, authentic Victorian singers, and Victorian carriage rides. Annual events include a Rod Run in February that features a display of antique cars; Western Days in April; a Fourth of July Celebration culminating in a hometown parade down Front Street and Heritage Days in August.



**Temecula's 4th of July Parade.**

The City's next marketing venture involves a study to determine the most appropriate large-scale user with the potential to increase pedestrian activity in Old Town. The City will use the study's findings to approach the right users, offering assistance as necessary for their location into Old Town.

# *City of Temecula Lessons Learned*

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- ▲ **Empowering** residents and/or stakeholders in a **community** is the most effective way in which to improve the quality of life.
- ▲ Revitalization efforts should be **comprehensive** and **multi-faceted**, with the participation of many City, County, and school district staff members.
- ▲ Public agencies need to conduct comprehensive **interviews** and **surveys** with affected residents and stakeholders in order to clearly identify what people really need before initiating any programs or projects.
- ▲ **Serious** revitalization effort require a major **commitment** of staff time and effort. Do not underestimate the level of commitment that may be required.
- ▲ **Follow through** by public agencies is absolutely critical on promises or commitments made by the agency in order to ensure **trust** and **credibility**. Programs and project need to be completed within agreed upon timeframes.
- ▲ Ongoing educational and **outreach** programs are essential in maintaining the integrity of redeveloped areas. It is vital to maintain **communication** with stakeholders long after projects and/or programs are in place.